A Kantian account of emotions as feelings

A Kantian Account of Emotions as Feelings[1]

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The aim of this paper is to extract from Kant's various writings an account of the nature of the emotions and their function – and to do so despite the fact that Kant himself neither uses the term 'emotion' nor offers a systematic treatment of it.[2] Kant's position, as I interpret it, challenges the contemporary trends that define emotions in terms of other mental states. By contrast with assimilative models that view emotions either as a species of belief or judgment, or as a species of desire, or as a combination of both,[3] on my interpretation Kant puts forward a model of the emotions that defines them first and foremost as 'feelings', which are a third, irreducible kind of mental state. Thus on the Kantian picture I put forward in this paper, while emotions may be associated with conative or cognitive states, they are distinct from both in significant ways. Kant grounds this difference by tracing emotions back to a distinct faculty of the mind: they originate not from the cognitive faculty or the conative faculty, but from the 'faculty of the feeling of pleasure and displeasure.' In this respect, I believe that Kant's account has much in common with the current theories that assign a central place to feelings in their accounts of the emotions.[4] As will become clear, however, he differs in his view of the nature and function of feelings.

While the role of feelings in Kant's philosophy has been discussed at length in the context of moral motivation, Kant's views on the nature of feelings have drawn surprisingly little attention.[5] Those who discuss it at all tend to put forward rather impoverished accounts of it, taking feelings to be mere brute sensations or to serve as insignificant intermediaries between cognition and desire.[6] By contrast, on my interpretation, the faculty of feeling has the distinct role of making us aware of the way our faculties relate to each other and to the world. As I will show, feelings are affective appraisals of our activity, and as such they play an indispensable orientational function in the Kantian mind.

To support this claim, I begin by spelling out the distinction between feeling and desire and argue that insofar as emotions are essentially feelings, not desires, their essential function is not motivational. I then turn to the distinction between feeling and cognition and show that while feelings are non-cognitive states, they have a form of

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[1] As the following works by Kant are cited frequently, I have used the following abbreviations throughout the paper: A (*Anthropology*), MM (*Metaphysics of Morals*), CJ (*Critique of the Power of Judgment*), CPR (*Critique of Pure Reason*), CPrR (*Critique of Practical Reason*), G (*Groundwork*), LL (*Lectures on Logic*), LE (*Lectures on Ethics*), LA (*Lectures on Anthropology*). The reference is to the Akademie edition of Kant's works, using the translations from the Cambridge Edition of Kant's Works (Cambridge University Press).

[2] Kant uses the terms *Affekt*, *Leidenschaft*, *Neigung*, *Gefühl*, *Rührung*, *Begierde*. For a brief history of the relatively late creation of the word *Emotion*, see in particular Dixon (2012).

[3] See respectively Nussbaum (2001), Oddie (2005), and Solomon (1976) or more recently Reisenzein (2009).

[4] E.g., James (1884), Goldie (2000) and Prinz (2004).

[5] One notable exception is Sorensen and Williamson, eds. (2018). Some instances of discussions of the role of feelings in Kant's account of moral motivation include Herman (1993), Sherman (1997), Wood (1999) and more recently Grenberg (2001), Sorensen (2002), Geiger (2011), and Ware (2014).

[6] For the former, see Beck (1960, pp. 93-94), Sabini and Silver (1987, p. 166), Korsgaard (1996, p. 225), and Guyer (1997, pp. 103-5). For the latter, see Matthews (1997, p. 18), Wuerth (2014, pp. 221-34), Frierson (2014b, p. 57), and Sweet (2018).

'derived-intentionality' that stems from their relationship with judgment. In §3, I argue that what feelings are about, in this derived sense, is our relationship to ourselves and the world: they function as affective appraisals of the state of our agency. I then show that this function is necessary to the activity of the mind insofar as it is orientational: it is indispensable for beings who act and need to appraise their relationship to the world and to themselves in order to act.[7] Finally in §5, I further support this interpretation by discussing two cases, the feelings of epistemic pleasure and moral contentment, and showing in what sense they manifest the state of cognitive and moral agency, respectively. I conclude by drawing the implications of my account for our understanding of Kant's philosophy in general as well as for current debates in the philosophy of emotion.

1. The distinction between feeling and desire

Although commentators often identify feelings with their motivational function and thus consider them together with desires, this section argues that there is a distinction between feelings and desires and that feelings should be defined independently of their relationship with desires, and thus independently of their motivational function.[8]

To support this claim, let me begin by pointing out that on Kant's account, while there is an obvious sense in which feelings are connected to desires – they can cause desires, and they can be caused by desires – significantly, they are not necessarily connected to desires. For there is on Kant's account at least one example of a feeling that 'is not necessarily connected with desire for an object' (MM 373 [6:212]), namely the feeling of the beautiful.[9] The existence of this feeling shows that feelings do not always cause desires, and thus that the essential function of feeling cannot be to motivate. Of course, most feelings have a motivational function. They are what Kant calls 'practical feelings', feelings that are 'necessarily connected with desire' (MM 374 [6:212]), and Kant often refers to this function in his definition of feeling.[10] However

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[7] To avoid misunderstandings, note that on my reading, agency is broader than moral agency; it encompasses all the levels of human agency, from technical and prudential activity to moral agency and cognition (by contrast with Fugate (2014, pp. 344-5) for instance). Contrary to what is often assumed, activity, including self-determining activity, is not just the remit of practical reason; theoretical reason and cognition in general are not beyond the realm of agency (see e.g. Kant 2001, p. 255 [7:27]). I have defended this claim in Cohen (2018b).

[8] See for instance Grenberg (2001, p. 163). This point is well taken by Diane Williamson (2015, p. 86). See also Frierson (2014a, p. 170) and contrast with Frierson (2014b, p. 60). According to Kant's taxonomy, the faculty of feeling includes feelings and affects while the faculty of desire includes inclinations and passions – in each case, the first instance is the normal affective state, while the second is its pathological form (A 353 [7:251]). As Paul Guyer notes, Kant organises his thought about the human mind around the tripartite division into the powers of cognition, feeling, and desire as early as 1772–73 (2000, p. xvi). However, as a referee pointed out, the distinction between the faculty of feeling and desire is not as clearly spelled out in the early anthropology lectures as it is in later works, in particular the *Critique of Practical Reason* (e.g. CPrR 143 [5:9]), the *Critique of Judgment* (e.g. CJ 82 [5:196]) and the *Metaphysics of Morals* (e.g. MM 373 [6:211]). For a more detailed discussion of the distinction between feeling and desire, see Cohen 2018a.

[9] As Kant writes, 'We have pleasure or displeasure without desiring or abhorring, e.g., if we see a beautiful area, then it enchants us, but we will not on that account wish at once to possess it. Pleasure or displeasure is thus something entirely different from the faculty of desire' (LM 247 [29:877-8]). See also CJ 12 [20:207] and CJ 105 [5:220]. There are many ways of interpreting the claim that the feeling of aesthetic pleasure is independent of the faculty of desire, but it is unnecessary to engage with these debates here. For a helpful discussion, see Guyer (1978, pp. 449-460).

[10] See for instance CPrR 155 [5:22], CJ 105 [5:220] and A 334 [7:231]. In fact, according to Kant, though feelings do not always cause desires, desires are always caused by feelings, since it is the faculty of

since not all feelings are connected with desire, we should look for an account of the faculty of feeling independent of its relationship to the faculty of desire in order to capture its essential function, a function that is common to all feelings.[11]

In taking emotions to constitute a class of mental states unified by the fact that they are feelings, the interpretation put forward in this paper goes against the recent trend in Kant scholarship that takes the diversity of affective states at face value, emphasizing that what we now call 'emotion' includes the numerous, distinct states that Kant calls feeling, affect, passion, inclination, desire, and even instinct. Instead of looking for a single account of the phenomena that we call 'emotions', these commentators settle for a mixed model.[12] Yet the problem with this model is that it overlooks the fact that there is something common and unique to emotions and thereby fails to recognise what makes these states 'emotions'. In contrast, my aim is to identify what they all share intrinsically.[13] As I will argue, what unifies them in spite of their apparent heterogeneity is the fact that they are essentially 'feelings'.[14]

As hinted at in the introduction, this claim is motivated by a central tenet of Kant's philosophy of mind that is often underappreciated, namely that our mental powers are constituted by three faculties: the faculty of cognition, which generates beliefs, the faculty of desire, which generates volitions, and the faculty of feeling. Without getting into the details of his account, what is central for the purpose of my argument is that each faculty gives rise to different kinds of mental states which have distinct functions in the general economy of the mind. The faculty of desire is what we sometimes call the will, or the executive faculty: it is the cause of the production of its object. By contrast, the faculty of feeling manifests the agreement (or lack thereof) 'of an object or of an action with the subjective conditions of life' (CPrR 144 [5:9fn]). A large part of this paper will be dedicated to explaining what Kant means by this, but at this early stage, what I take to be his fundamental intuition is that while feelings, like all our other mental states, are always connected with both cognitive and volitional states as part of the on-going activity of the mind, they are distinct from and irreducible to them in kind as well as in function.[15] By distinguishing between feelings and desires, this section has defended the claim that, contrary to what is often thought, the essential function of feeling is not motivational. The following section will turn to the distinction between feeling and cognition and argue that feelings are non-cognitive mental states.

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feeling that motivates the power of choice (see MM 528 [6:399]). To desire something is to have a representation of it accompanied by a feeling of pleasure. For a discussion of the motivational function of feeling, see Frierson, who gives a particularly clear and helpful account of the causal connections between feelings and desires (2014b, pp. 52-85), as well as Sorensen (2002, p. 114) and DeWitt (2014, pp. 7-11).

[11] It is only once we have identified the function of feeling, independently of desire, that we can make sense of its motivational role and thus of its connection to desire. In this sense, although it could well be the case that most feelings involve desires, it remains that on my reading, their motivational function is not the most fundamental one.

[12] See Frierson (2014a), DeWitt (2014), Borges (2004), and Sorensen (2002) in particular.

[13] Note that two recent works have adopted a similar strategy (Williamson 2015 and Deimling 2014), so my disagreement with them is on the actual definition of emotion, as will become clear as my argument develops.

[14] In this sense, 'emotion' is co-extensive with 'feeling'.

[15] As a result, while the contemporary category of 'emotions' covers a disputed territory, it may turn out that some of the states contemporary philosophers routinely class either as emotions or as a necessary part of emotions are not in fact classed by Kant as feelings. I would like to thank a referee of this journal for suggesting this clarificatory point.

2. Feelings as non-cognitive mental states with derived intentionality

According to Kant, a feeling is a kind of sensation, that is to say, a state in which the subject is conscious of her own state, 'a perception that refers to the subject as a modification of its state' (CPR 398 [A320/B376]). However, whereas a sensation other than a feeling can be incorporated in a cognition (e.g., 'the meadows is green', in which greenness 'belongs to **objective** sensation'), a feeling cannot: it 'is merely subjective, whereas all other sensation can be used for cognition' (CJ 92 [5:206], 26 [20:224], emphasis in original).[16] The subjective character of feeling consists in the fact that in feeling, 'nothing at all in the object is designated' (CJ 89 [5:203]).[17] The object is considered only 'as an object of satisfaction (which is not a cognition of it)' (CJ 92 [5:206]). On this basis, one thing that has been uncontroversial in the debate about Kant's view, at least until recently, is that no knowledge can be gained through feeling.[18]

Kant's non-cognitivism about feelings has often been interpreted as entailing that feelings are 'brute sensation-like' states that have no intentionality, an interpretation most famously put forward by Paul Guyer.[19] According to Guyer, there is no qualitative distinction between different pleasures, for pleasure is only a matter of degree. Feelings can be more or less pleasurable and thus they can differ in their intensity, but the pleasurableness is always the same.[20] It is because of this, he argues, that they cannot have intentionality. For they don't have any feature that can determine their reference and on which we can ground their intentional object. By contrast, Henry Allison, following Richard Aquila, argues that feelings can have intentionality while

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[16] See also MM 529 [6:400], CJ 75 [5:189] and LL 466 [24:730]. For Kant's account of sensation, see CPR 398-9 [A320/B376], LL 30-1 [9:44]. For Kant's account of feeling, see CJ 12 [20:208], 26 [20:224], 90 [5:204], MM 373 [6:211-2]. For a helpful discussion of Kant's account of sensation, see Falkenstein (1990). For a lengthy discussion of the distinction between feeling and sensation, see Zuckert (2007, pp. 232-6).

[17] It is in this respect that feelings are not reliable guides to assign properties to objects, although we often make the mistake of grounding our judgments on our feelings since they seem to inform us about the nature of the world (e.g., LL 157 [24:198]). I will return to this claim at the end of §3.

[18] A number of recent interpretations go against this relative consensus by emphasising the cognitive role of feelings (see Grenberg 2013, DeWitt 2014, Williamson 2015, and Gorodeisky 2018). Janelle DeWitt, for instance, argues that feeling is 'the faculty responsible for practical cognition – i.e., the faculty that judges the object of a representation of cognition to be good in relation to a subject' (2014, pp. 11-2). Thereby, she seems to reassign to feeling the cognitive role traditionally associated with practical reason. Keren Gorodeisky also maintains that through feelings, we learn about the world. On her interpretation, Kant's non-cognitivism about feelings does not entail the denial that they may reveal properties that are part of the fabric of the world (personal communication and 2018, pp. 169-70). One worry with these cognitive readings is that it is hard to see how they can be reconciled with Kant's repeated claim that feelings yield no cognition. Another worry is that they undermine the affective character of feeling by over-intellectualising it and making it indistinguishable from a cognitive state, thereby compromising Kant's tripartite distinction of the mind.

[19] See Guyer (1997, pp. 99–119, pp. 170-4). See also Beck (1960, pp. 93-94), Sabini and Silver (1987, p. 166), Oakley (1992, p. 94), and Sherman (1997, p. 177). Note, however, that Guyer himself doesn't find Kant's view as he interprets it plausible (1997, pp. 104-5).

[20] By contrast on my reading, the passages that seem to support Guyer's view merely claim that feelings are 'of the same kind' 'as an incentive for the desires' (CJ 150 [5:266]), insofar as 'they properly constitute the determining ground of the will' (CPrR 157 [5:23]). In other words, insofar as some pleasures are motivational, they are of the same kind with respect to this function. Independently of their motivational function, however, I will argue that they are not of the same kind.

being non-cognitive. They are modes of consciousness through which we become aware of their cause.[21]

Now, I am sympathetic with Guyer's view that it is hard to see how feelings can have intentionality in and of themselves, although I hold it on different grounds. As I noted at the beginning of this section, insofar as in feeling 'nothing at all in the object is designated' (CJ 89 [5:203]), how can they refer to objects? Yet I am sympathetic with Allison's view that feelings do have intentionality. Kant defines pleasure as 'the representation of the agreement of an object or of an action with the subjective conditions of life' (CPrR 144 [5:9fn]). Thus feelings have a form of aboutness that needs to be accounted for, or at least explained away. On this basis, my aim is to defend a middle ground position between Guyer's non-intentionalist and Allison's intentionalist position.[22] I will show against Guyer that feelings are neither qualitatively identical nor non-intentional; and I will show against Allison that they are not intrinsically intentional either. What I will argue is that they have intentionality, but one that is 'derived'.[23] To support this claim, I will begin by showing that different feelings have what I will call different 'phenomenological characters': they are qualitatively different from each other and these differences cannot be reduced to mere differences in intensity. I will then show that it is these phenomenological differences that provide the ground for the possibility of the intentionality of feeling. However, I will further argue that feelings need to be reflectively interpreted by judgment in order to acquire intentionality. On this basis, I will conclude that judgment is the condition of the intentionality of feeling.

As already suggested, Guyer argues that insofar as the only difference between feelings is quantitative, we can only distinguish between them qualitatively on the basis of their causes. By contrast, on my reading, feelings have distinctive 'felt' characters we are aware of – their 'phenomenological characters'.[24] Of course, as Kant often notes, 'pleasure or displeasure, since they are not kinds of cognition, cannot be explained by themselves at all' (CJ 33 [20:232]). We cannot know what kind of feelings we feel simply by feeling them, for we struggle to make sense of them in discursive terms. Kant nevertheless attempts to describe them in their variety by appealing to the different ways in which they linger, the different movements of the mind they consist in, what

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[21] As Allison writes, feelings are 'peculiar modes of "feeling-consciousness" or awareness, with a non-objective, non-cognitive form of intentionality' (1998, p. 477). See also Allison (2001, pp. 51-54, p. 69), Aquila (1982) and Cannon (2008). Along similar lines, Rachel Zuckert defines pleasure 'as a representation "about" other subjective states as such' (2007, p. 233) and Hannah Ginsborg as 'intentional or judgmental' (2003, p. 174). While there are significant differences in their respective accounts of the intentionality of pleasure (e.g., by contrast with Ginsborg, Zuckert doesn't take the intentionality of pleasure to be judgmental (2007, p. 234)), what is crucial for my account is that they share the claim that for Kant, pleasure can have intentionality while being non-cognitive. A contemporary version of the claim that emotions can be both intentional and non-cognitive can be found in Goldie (2002, especially pp. 18-21). Interestingly, many objections raised against his account also apply to non-cognitivist, intentionalist interpretations of Kant's view. In particular, Goldie struggles to account for the central yet mysterious notion of 'feeling towards' which is intended to capture the intentionality of feelings (see for instance Deonna and Teroni 2012, p. 70).

[22] For an illuminating discussion of the difference between intentional and non-intentional readings of Kant's account of the feeling of aesthetic pleasure, see the exchange between Guyer and Allison in Kukla, ed. (2006, pp. 118-9, 130-1).

[23] See for instance Alex Byrne's definition: 'A thing has derivative intentionality just in case the fact that it represents such-and-such can be explained in terms of the intentionality of something else' (2006, p. 408). I would like to thank an Associate Editor of this journal for pointing out that what I have in mind is akin to contemporary accounts of derived intentionality.

[24] In contemporary literature, this is sometimes called the hedonic character of emotions: some emotions differ qualitatively from others (see for instance Goldstein 2002, p. 26).

he calls the different outpourings of vital force, and so on.[25] While these descriptions cannot possibly fully capture their phenomenological character since, after all, feelings 'are felt, not understood' (CJ 33 [20:232]), they do suggest that for Kant, feelings have distinctive phenomenological characters on the basis of which they are distinguishable from each other.[26]

However, being aware of the phenomenal character of our feelings is not sufficient to make sense of them; they need to be interpreted by reflective judgment in light of their situational context – both internal (our past experience, our emotional history, our personality etc.) and external (what triggered them, their causal history, but also the way the world is more generally) as well as their phenomenological character.[27] Although this interpretative process cannot give rise to any knowledge of our feelings, it enables us to discover, identify, recognize, classify, anticipate, evaluate and re-evaluate them. [28] While what gives them their affective colour is their phenomenological character, we cannot make sense of their meaning until we reflect on them in light of their context. This suggests that, by contrast with Allison's account,

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[25] Respectively in CJ 107 [5:222], 108 [5:223], and 111 [5:226]. See also the complex phenomenological descriptions of the feeling of respect as the 'consciousness of the *subordination* of my will to a law' (CPrR 203 [5:78-9], emphasis in original), the sublime as involving 'as its characteristic mark a **movement** of the mind' (CJ 131 [5:247], emphasis in original) and Kant's approval of Burke's psychological descriptions of the difference between the phenomenology of the feeling of the beautiful and that of the sublime (CJ 158 [5:277]). In this sense, on Kant's account, all feelings are not reducible to physical reactions to certain objects or events; rather, many physical reactions are caused by mental feelings (although not all – think for instance of instinctive bodily feelings). Thus, many bodily sensations usually associated with emotions turn out to be physiological reactions of the body to mental feelings – they are neither reducible to them, nor their cause, but rather their effect on the body (see LA [25:600] and A 265 [7:154]). In this sense, Kant's position is the reverse of William James (1884), at least with regards to mental feelings.

[26] Note that feelings are said to be distinguishable from each other by type rather than token. Although I will not be able to argue for this claim until the following section, on my account, different feelings (whether cognitive, moral, aesthetic, or sensible) have different phenomenological characters because they are generated by different faculties. For instance, cognitive faculties generate epistemic feelings, practical faculties moral feelings, and so on (see CJ 95 [5:209–10], A 333-4 [7:230] and MM 373-4 [6:212-3]). So to avoid potential misunderstandings identified by a referee of this journal, note that my argument does not weigh against Guyer's view that feelings differ from each other insofar as they are effects of different causes. Rather, it weighs against his claim that if we consider feelings independently of their causes, the only difference between them is quantitative. For on my account, in order to distinguish between different kinds of pleasures, we do not need to identify their causes; we can do so simply on the basis of their phenomenological characters.

[27] The role of context in the interpretation of our feelings is akin to that of 'identifying causes' in contemporary debates, that is, causes that are not part of the things that they cause but have an essential role in identifying the things that they cause (see for instance Green 1992 and Prinz 2004). Although I cannot support this claim here, this allows for affective normativity since a feeling that has acquired derived intentionality can be more or less appropriate in a given situation. See for instance Kant's discussion of the anger of the rich man against the servant who broke a vase (A 356 [7:254]). What makes his feeling unjustified is that his judgment of the situation is incorrect. For a contemporary version of this claim, see Helm (2001).

[28] See Kant (2002, p. 186 [4:471] and LE 383 [27:645]. I will return to the claim that the interpretative process that makes sense of the intentional object of feelings cannot give rise to objective knowledge either of the world or ourselves in §4. In the meantime, it is sufficient to note that for Kant, in reflective judgment by contrast with determinant judgment, the faculty of judgment must find a universal concept or rule that applies to a particular instance: 'If, however, only the particular is given, for which the universal is to be found, then the power of judgment is merely reflecting' (CJ 67 [5:179]). For an account of the Kantian distinction between reflective interpretation and cognition, see Makkreel (2003). For a helpful account of the interpretative work of reflective judgment, see Makkreel (1990, especially pp. 111-3).

the aboutness of feelings is not intrinsic to feelings themselves but rather constituted by reflective judgment. For on my account, it is through an interpretative process that we associate feelings with certain causes and circumstances whereby they acquire a form of aboutness.[29] In this sense, feelings do have intentionality for us, but it is derived from our reflective interpretation of them.[30] This account of feelings' intentionality allows us to make sense of Kant's repeated claim that the function of feeling is akin to that of judgment although it does not itself produce judgments.[31] On my reading, feelings function as appraisals, but rather than conveying their appraisals through representational content, as judgment would, they convey it through their valence – either pleasurable or painful.[32] They need the interpretative work of reflective judgment, however, in order to come to represent their intentional object and thus acquire meaning.[33] Feelings like bitter joy or sweet sorrow, both discussed by Kant, are a case in point. On my account, they can be accounted for by the fact that while the object triggers a feeling with a certain valence (joy or sorrow), the feeling acquires its meaning through reflection on the context of its occurrence as well as our interests and our normative commitments (i.e., the feeling of sorrow acquires a positive meaning (sweetness) and the feeling of joy acquires a negative meaning (bitterness)). As Kant notes, 'The object can be pleasant, but the enjoyment of it, displeasing' (A 340 [7:237]).

However, to avoid potential misunderstandings, note that on my account, judgment does not simply identify or fill out the feeling by allowing us to recognize its cause, as on Guyer's interpretation. Rather, the feeling has an independent phenomenological character that requires reflective judgement to provide it with intentionality. Thus judgment is constitutive of feeling in the sense that it makes it possible as an intentional state. An important advantage of this interpretative claim is that it makes sense of Kant's well-known but rarely commented-on statement that the power of judgment contains the a priori principle of feeling.[34] On my reading, the relationship between judgement and feeling is accounted for by the fact that judgment is transcendentally necessary to account for the possibility of feeling as the faculty that enables the mind to be affectively aware of its own state. Judgment is thus the

[29] An interesting implication of this view is that by contrast with human beings, while animals feel and their feelings are indicative of their mental states through their phenomenological profile, feelings have no meaning for the animals since they lack the capacity to interpret, judge and classify their feelings so as to grant them intentionality.

[30] An advantage of this view is that it can account for the fact that I can feel jealous but not know that I feel jealous (i.e., not know that what I feel is jealousy). In this case, I am aware of a feeling of pain through its phenomenological character, but unless I reflect on it, I cannot identify its meaning. This view can thus address a traditional objection against feeling theories of emotions, namely that it is impossible for an agent to be unaware of, or misidentify his feelings (see Ben-Zeev 1987, p. 401 and Ryle 1949, p. 99).

[31] See for instance Kant's claim that the faculty of feeling is a 'special faculty for discriminating and judging' (CJ 90 [5:204]), or that in an aesthetic judgment, it looks 'just as if it [a feeling of pleasure] were a predicate associated with the cognition of the object' (CJ 77 [5:191]). Contrast with Borges, who identifies feelings with judgments (Borges 2004, p. 151-2).

[32] The function of appraisal is something Allison notes, albeit briefly, about aesthetic feeling (2001, p. 69). Wood formulates this function in terms of valuation (2014, p. 142).

[33] Although I cannot defend this claim here, I believe that the capacity to interpret our feelings as manifestations of the activity of our faculties is what Kant calls in the *Critique of Judgment* 'common sense' (see CJ 173-4 [5:293]).

[34] See CJ 82 [5:196] and 44-5 [20:245-6]. Commentators have struggled to explain the connection Kant draws between feeling and judgment (though there are notable attempts, e.g., Zuckert 2007, pp. 370-82).

transcendental condition of the intentionality of feelings.[35] However, what remains to be determined is the nature of their intentional object.

3. The intentional object of feeling

The aim of this section is to argue that feelings are about our relationship to ourselves and the world: they function as affective appraisals of the state of our agency. As I will show, feeling functions as appraisal at two distinct levels, for it can be directed either towards objects, or towards the subject. This is due to the fact that each faculty of the mind has a higher and a lower form for Kant. Lower faculties are concerned with objects and passively receive representations from them, while higher faculties are concerned with the subject and are themselves sources of representations. Accordingly, the higher faculty of feeling is concerned with the subject, the lower faculty with objects.[36] On this basis, this section will show that lower feelings function as appraisals of the relation between subject and object, whereas higher feelings function as appraisals of the relation between the subject's faculties – pleasurable when the relation is one of agreement and painful when the relation is one of disagreement. I will examine them in turn.

3.1. Lower feelings as valenced appraisals of the relation between the subject and the object

As already noted, Kant defines pleasure in terms of 'the agreement of an object or of an action with the subjective conditions of life' (CPrR 144 [5:9fn]). In the context of lower feelings, the subjective conditions of life should be understood in terms of our subjective ends, including our happiness and the incentives of our inclinations (subjective values, sensible desires, private satisfaction, biological needs, etc.). Lower feelings appraise whether an object (potentially or actually) satisfies the subject's lower desires. Pleasure occurs when the object is in agreement with the subjective condition of the subject, pain when it is not. This is what we could call a teleological conception of feeling: it appraises whether the object agrees with an end, a desire or an interest of the subject. Lower feelings are thus about the relation between the subject and the object.[37]

3.2 Higher feelings as valenced appraisals of the state of agency

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[35] This is why Kant can define pleasure as 'the representation of the agreement of an object or of an action with the subjective conditions of life' while being committed to its non-cognitivism (CPrR 144 [5:9fn]). Pleasure comes to represent for us through the exercise of reflective judgment. What its meaning consists in will only become clear in the following section but to anticipate for a moment, it manifests the state of our relation to the world and to ourselves.

[36] See LM 48-9 [28:228]. For a discussion of the distinction between higher and lower faculties, see Wuerth (2014, pp. 211-15).

[37] As Kant writes, 'pleasure or displeasure (in what is red or sweet) expresses nothing at all in the object but simply a relation to the subject' (MM 373 [6:211-12]). Some may object that this account of sensible feelings does not apply to instinctual or primal feelings such as fear or lust. But on my interpretation, these feelings retain the same function except for the fact that the ends they reflect are those of the body rather than the mind – Kant talks about the inclination for sex and freedom in this context (A 369-70 [7:267-9]). To make sense of it, see in particular what Kant calls 'animal pleasure' and pain, which corresponds to 'animal' life as opposed to human and spiritual life (LM [28:248]), helpfully discussed in Newton (2017). For an insightful account of sensible feelings in the context of Kant's empirical psychology, see Frierson (2014b, pp. 57-60).

Higher feeling is more difficult to make sense of than lower feeling since rather than being concerned with the relation between the subject and objects, it is concerned with the state of the subject as it relates to itself: it 'is a power to sense a pleasure and displeasure in ourselves, independently of objects' (LM 48-9 [28:228]). On my reading, this means that it is concerned with the relations, within the subject herself, among her various faculties. That is, higher feelings are affective appraisals of the mind's activity and in particular the ways in which its various faculties cooperate with each other. To make sense of this claim, I need to return briefly to the nature of the Kantian mind.

As already discussed, Kant takes the mind to be constituted by three distinct faculties (cognition, feeling and desire). Insofar as these faculties function best under certain conditions, their interest is to have these conditions satisfied so that their operation is promoted, their activity furthered and their aim realised.[38] When the exercise of a faculty is advanced, a feeling of pleasure is triggered, when it is hindered, a feeling of pain is triggered. For instance, insofar as 'The interest of [reason's] speculative use consists in the *cognition* of the object up to the highest a priori principle' (CPrR 236 [5:120], emphasis in original), successful cognition gives rise to a feeling of pleasure.[39] However, it would be a mistake to conclude that higher feelings simply register whether our faculties' interests are attained. Of course, Kant often says that 'the attainment of every aim is combined with the feeling of pleasure' (CJ 73 [5:187]), and this applies to all kinds of aims – e.g., cognitive pleasure when cognition is achieved, moral pleasure when good willing is achieved, and so on. But first, not all feelings manifest the attainment of an aim – the feeling of aesthetic pleasure is a case in point. Second, and more importantly for my argument, the function of feeling is much broader than that of registering the attainment of our ends: it appraises the state of our agency in general. This function can be accounted for in light of the fact that the Kantian mind requires a certain form of organization in order to function, namely a harmonious relationship between its faculties and their respective interests so as to enable it to act at all.[40] Yet insofar as the faculties' interaction is always on-going and its harmony never completely realized, anything that inhibits their harmonious interaction inhibits the mind's capacity for agency and vice-versa, anything that facilitates it facilitates this capacity.[41] On this basis, anything that hinders harmony and thus agency is painful, whilst everything that facilitates it is pleasurable. It is in this sense that by manifesting the ways in which our faculties interact with each other, higher feeling functions as an appraisal of our mental agency, its state and its progress.[42] Accordingly, while lower feelings function as appraisals of our relation to the world, higher feelings function as appraisals of the activity of our mind in relation to itself (see Table 1).[43]

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[38] Note that this notion of interest is akin to a teleological notion of flourishing that is divorced from desire. For an elaboration of this claim, see Guyer (1997, p. 71).

[39] I will get back to this claim in more detail in §5.

[40] As Kant puts it, the mind requires the functioning of 'all the higher faculties in accordance with their systematic unity' (CJ 82 [5:197]). See also CJ 44 [20:244]. For a discussion of the systematic unity of the faculties, see in particular Ferrarin (2015, pp. 25-57).

[41] Of course, not all activity is pleasurable and faculties can go into overdrive, in which case their capacity for agency becomes hindered. Kant remarks that this occurs in cases of intoxication (e.g., opium and alcohol in A 280 [7:170]) but he also notes faculty-specific overdrive (A 309-sq. [7:202-sq.]).

[42] While it differs in its details, this account of higher feeling as appraising mental activity has much in common with contemporary accounts of epistemic emotions as metacognitive (e.g., Proust 2013). On my reading of Kant, however, this function is common to all higher feelings rather than just epistemic ones.

[43] One may object that there are only so many different cases of (dis-)agreement between our faculties, and thus that the emotional spread available to Kant is in fact rather limited. However, recall that on my

Finally, Kant's account allows for feelings that are a mix of lower and higher feeling (i.e., they are both about ourselves and our relation to the world). The feeling of aesthetic pleasure is a case in point. For on my reading, this feeling turns out to have two intentional objects: the relation between subject and object (namely their agreement), and the relation between the cognitive faculties of the subject (namely the free play between imagination and understanding). Many interpreters have noted that Kant seems to go back and forth on what the intentional object of aesthetic pleasure is, sometimes suggesting that it is a perceptual object, and sometimes taking it to be the state of the subject.[44] What my interpretation suggests is that we can account for this apparent wavering because both views are in fact partially correct. For the distinctiveness of the feeling of aesthetic pleasure consists in the fact that it is at once object-oriented and subject-oriented: object-oriented insofar as it manifests the agreement of the object with the subject (as lower feelings do), and subject-oriented insofar as it manifests the agreement between the cognitive faculties of the subject (as higher feelings do).[45] In other words, it shares features with both lower and higher feelings, which accounts for Kant's claim that the feeling of the beautiful is a 'partly sensuous, partly intellectual pleasure' (A 342 [7:239]).

Of course, a lot more could be said to flesh out this picture, in particular about how higher feelings interact with lower feelings. Insofar as higher feelings manifest the various ways in which our faculties interact with each other and impact each other, they manifest an array of interests and activities that can potentially compete with each other as well as with our lower feelings, including bodily, sensible and prudential ones. On the picture defended here, the same object, event, or activity can thus trigger different kinds of feelings (higher vs. lower, negatively vs. positively valenced) insofar as different interests are in play at the same time. For instance, we often will against our lower selves when we will for the sake of duty. In such cases, willing and lower desire are in a relation of disagreement, which gives rise to a lower feeling of sensible pain, while willing and practical reason are in a relation of agreement, which gives rise to a higher feeling of moral pleasure.[46] In this sense, to the extent that we have different needs and interests (cognitive, prudential, moral), we have a whole range of feelings that reflect them and thus potentially conflict with each other.

However, what this account of the intentional object of feeling seems to suggest is that feelings are really only about ourselves and not at all about the world, which if true would go against common sense intuition as well as many if not most contemporary accounts of emotions. For emotions are generally taken to be not only directed at the world but also about the world.[47] Yet on Kant's account as I interpret it, the closest that emotions come to being about the world is in the case of our most basic emotions, the lower feelings, and even there, they simply manifest how we are affected by the world rather than being about the world; and all the more in the case of higher feelings, which

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interpretation, the nuance we experience in our emotional states is not only generated by the causes of the feelings and their phenomenological profiles, but also by the interpretative work of reflective judgment on our feelings and the causal web they are part of in the world and in our minds. In this sense, we do experience a wide palette of emotions on my account.

[44] See for instance Schaper 1973, pp. 443-4 and Kneller 1986, p. 322.

[45] Accordingly, the feeling of aesthetic displeasure (i.e., ugliness) could be thought of on this model in terms of the disharmony between both the object and the subject on the one hand, and the cognitive faculties of the subject on the other hand. See Cohen (2013).

[46] See MM 533 [6:405]. I will return to this claim in more detail in §5.

[47] As Robert Solomon formulates it, 'The objects of the emotions are objects of *our* world, the world as we experience it' (1976, p. 115). Peter Goldie calls this 'the world-directed aspect of emotion' (2002, p. 242).

only manifest the state of our activity. For instance, shame is a feeling that manifests the disharmony between what I have willed (my maxim) and the demand of practical reason (my duty). It seems to be about the world (e.g., I am ashamed of my action, a situation, or another agent) but in effect it isn't; it is only about the disagreement between my faculties. So is Kant's account simply implausible?

To address this worry, I want to begin by stressing that Kant's claim that feelings are not about the world is not an unsavoury implication of his account I have to endorse given other systematic commitments. In fact, far from being a weakness of his account, I believe that it is his most valuable insight. Feelings are about ourselves and the state of our agency, and this is precisely what distinguishes them from cognitive and conative states, which are about the world (i.e., their function is to reflect it or change it). Through feeling, by contrast, we 'sense ourselves' insofar as we are affected (LM 63 [28:247]). Moreover, and crucially for the plausibility of this claim, Kant's account can explain away the fact that our feelings seem to inform us about the world. For, it's not that feelings bear no relation to the world. They do. But this relation is merely causal: 'With pleasure and displeasure what matters is not the object, but rather how the object affects the mind' (LM 63 [28:246]). Our feelings are the result of the fact that the world affects us, which gives us the impression that they are about the world. If it weren't for them, we wouldn't be affected by anything and thus nothing would have any salience.[48]

> If we take away the faculty of pleasure and displeasure from all rational beings, […] everything would be the same to them, for they would lack the faculty for being affected by objects. (LM 62 [28:246])

Yet to feel is to experience ourselves as we are affected, not the world.[49]

To summarise what I have argued in this section, let's turn to what I believe to be Kant's most detailed statement of the intentional object of feeling.

> Here the representation is related entirely to the subject, indeed to its feeling of life, under the name of the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, which grounds an entirely special faculty for discriminating and jdging that contributes nothing to cognition but only holds the given representation in the subject up to the entire faculty of representation, of which the mind becomes conscious in the feeling of its state. (CJ 90 [5:204])

This passage is rather dense but its meaning should be clearer by now. On my reading, it should be interpreted as suggesting that the function of feeling is to enable us to become aware of our relation to ourselves and the world through affective appraisals of the state and progress of our activity. Feelings are thus ubiquitous in the Kantian mind. Not only do they accompany all our activity, they play a substantial role *vis-à-vis* agency. However, what remains to be shown is what this role consists in. The aim of the following section is to argue that feelings are necessary for the purpose of orienting our activity.

Table 1. The different kinds of feelings

Lower feeling
• Agreeable: agreement between lower faculty of desire (inclination) and object

[48] To avoid a potential misunderstanding, note that I don't mean to imply that objects wouldn't affect us in Kant's technical sense of affection (CPR 155 [A 19-20/B 34]). Here, I am only concerned with our affective relationship to the world.

[49] As Kant writes, 'If I speak of an object insofar it is beautiful or ugly, agreeable or disagreeable, then I am acquainted not with the object in itself, as it is' (LM 62 [28:245-6]).

• Disagreeable: disagreement between lower faculty of desire (inclination) and object
Higher feeling
• Intellectual satisfaction: agreement between higher faculties (cognitive and conative)
• Intellectual dissatisfaction: disagreement between higher faculties (cognitive and conative)
Aesthetic feeling (partly higher and partly lower feeling)
• Aesthetic pleasure (beauty): agreement between object and higher cognitive faculties (i.e., the imagination and understanding, which are in free harmony with each other)
• Aesthetic displeasure (ugliness): disagreement between object and higher cognitive faculties (i.e., the imagination and understanding, which are in free disharmony with each other)

4. The orientational function of feeling

As is well-known, Kant discusses the concept of orientation in the context of the way in which we orient ourselves in thought. When knowledge is unavailable, as it is in the case of the supersensible, we have to orient ourselves on the basis of 'a subjective principle', 'a subjective ground of differentiation' (Kant 2001, p. 10 [8:136n], p. 9 [8:135]), that is to say a feeling.[50] The difference between orientation and mapping is thus that mapping relies on objective features (e.g., there is a table here and a door there) whereas orientation relies on subjective features (e.g., a feeling of which of my hands is my right hand and which is my left given that they are incongruent counterparts).[51] While I cannot discuss the detail of Kant's account here, what is crucial for my interpretation is that orientation is subjective in the sense that not only does it take place from the perspective of the subject, it relies on her subjective mental states, namely her feelings. On my interpretation of Kant's theory of emotion, just as we orient ourselves geographically on the basis of a felt sense of the difference between our left and right, so, too, we orient our activity on the basis of the difference between our feelings of pleasure and pain. Of course, just as the feeling of left and right is necessary but not sufficient to orient ourselves in a dark room (i.e., we must know something of the geography of the room, where we want to go, etc.), feelings of pleasure and pain are necessary but not sufficient to orient our activity; we need judgement to interpret them in light of their context. However, the notion of orientation is intended to capture the distinctive contribution of feeling to the activity of the subject: it appraises her relation to the world and to herself, thereby enabling her to act accordingly.[52] In this sense, the mind orients itself on the basis of its feelings.

[50] In the case of our orientation in the supersensible, the feeling in question is 'reason's feeling of its own need' (Kant 2001, p. 10 [8:136]). What this subjective principle actually consists in is the object of ongoing debates that go well beyond the remit of this paper. For a discussion of the nature and function of this feeling, see Cohen (2017a). One of the few discussions of Kant's view of orientation can be found in Tinguely (2013).

[51] For a discussion of Kant's argument on incongruous counterparts, see Earman (1991).

[52] Kant often hints at the claim that the connection between feeling and agency is crucial: 'Life is the inner principle of self-activity. […] Only active beings can have pleasure and displeasure. Subjects that are active according to representations have pleasure and displeasure' (LM [28:247-8]). See also A 334

Yet one may question whether feelings are in fact necessary for orienting our activity. For it seems that we are able to introspect our mental activity and thereby make sense of it independently of our feelings. If so, in what sense is the contribution of feeling unique or even essential to our activity?[53] To answer this question, we need to distinguish between two modes of awareness of our mental activity, namely the awareness of what we are doing and the awareness of how it is going. On my reading, while introspection allows the former, feelings provide the latter. Of course, self-reflection could in principle lead to appraisals, for instance if we evaluate the progress of our activity in light of our desires, intentions and interests.[54] However, first, this would entail a costly, never-ending cognitive process that could potentially interfere with, if not hinder, our ongoing activity.[55] Second, one may actually question whether self-reflection could even lead to such appraisals. For although I cannot defend this claim here, on Kant's picture of the mind as I interpret it, the introspective, cognitive access we have to our own mental activity is in fact epistemically unreliable – so much so that I would argue that it cannot give rise to knowledge strictly speaking. This is due to a variety of factors that include not only self-deception and illusion but more importantly the very nature of inner sense.[56] Taking these epistemic doubts seriously would entail that feelings are not mere shortcuts; they afford us a unique form of access to, and appraisal of, our activity. But since a full defense of this claim would require a lengthy discussion of Kant's view of self-knowledge, a less controversial claim could be that while feelings may not be the only way of appraising the state of our activity, they are the most efficient way of doing so.

However, this claim seems to suggest that feelings turn out to contribute to our cognition of ourselves, which if correct would contradict the non-cognitivism thesis stated in §2. For, the view put forward in this section could be read as entailing that feelings, when interpreted by judgment in light of their context, do provide knowledge, or at least some sort of evidence about ourselves and our activity.[57] To understand why this is not the case, recall that when Kant claims that we cannot cognize through feelings, he always specifies that we cannot even cognize ourselves: feeling 'does not serve for any cognition at all, not even that by which the subject **cognizes** itself' (CJ 92 [5:206]; emphasis in the original).[58] As feelings convey their appraisals through their valence,

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[7:231], LA [25:167], CJ 90 [5:204], LL 31 [9:45]) R 567, LM 346 [28:586]. On my reading, when Kant talks about life, we should understand it in terms of our capacity for agency in general.

[53] I would like to thank a referee of this journal for raising this objection which allowed me to refine considerably my account of the distinctive contribution of feeling.

[54] However, note that the awareness of our faculties as they interact is indirect: what we are aware of is the result of their interaction, including our activity, the mental states it results in, and of course the feelings they give rise to.

[55] For instance, observing oneself in order to reach conclusions about one's inner states interferes with actual psychological states, modifies psychological phenomena and threatens the very possibility of acting (A 232–3 [7:121]). A contemporary version of this worry can be found in the Frame problem (Dennett 1986). On some views, the function of emotion is precisely to enable human beings to bypass it (e.g., de Sousa 1987, pp. 190-6).

[56] While I cannot discuss it in detail here, note that for Kant, psychological phenomena are inherently blurry (see esp. A 245–6 [7:134] and Kant 2011, p. 7 [4:471]). Thus becoming aware of our mental activity as it is happening gives rise to unique epistemic challenges. For a discussion of the reasons why one may doubt that transcendental philosophy can provide an adequate account of empirical self-knowledge, see for instance Westphal (2004) and Allison (2004). For a discussion of the relationship between introspection and the possibility of a science of psychology, see Makkreel (2001), Sturm (2001) and more recently Chignell (2017) and Forgione (2018).

[57] I would like to thank a referee of this journal for pressing this point.

[58] See also feelings of pleasure and pain 'contain no relation at all to an object for possible cognition of it (or even cognition of our condition)' (MM 373 [6:211-2]).

they don't provide cognition, even when properly interpreted. As Kant repeatedly notes, 'To cognize something and to be pleased with something are two different things' (LA 117 [25:559]). Feelings are neither true nor false, and an affective appraisal of ourselves is not a cognition of ourselves – hence their non-cognitive status. It is thus in some sense in spite of this status that we rely on them to orient our activity.

Yet whether we should orient ourselves on the basis of our feelings is a different question. For feelings do not orient us is any straightforward way: not everything pleasurable should be pursued just as not everything painful should be avoided. This makes sense in light of the derived intentionality of feelings spelt out in §2. The need to reflect on our feelings and their valence in order to provide them with meaning accounts for the fact that some pains should not be ended although they manifest as negatively valenced in their phenomenological profile. Thus feelings alone, without judgment, are not reliable guides for orientation. They should only be used for the purpose of orientation once we have reflected upon them.[59]

As a result, to sum up the view I have defended, by enabling the awareness of our relation to the world and to ourselves through affective appraisals of the state of our agency, feelings allow us to orient our activity. To further support this account of the role of feeling *vis-à-vis* agency, the following section examines two instances of higher feelings, namely epistemic pleasure and moral contentment. As I will show, their function is orientational insofar as they manifest and appraise the state of cognitive and moral agency respectively.

5. The case of epistemic pleasure and moral contentment

This section focuses on two cases of higher feelings that are generally overlooked in the literature, namely epistemic pleasure and moral contentment. I will show that on Kant's account, our cognitive and moral endeavors, when successful, give rise to feelings of pleasure. On my reading, these feelings play an essential role in our cognitive and moral lives, for they function as affective appraisals of our cognitive and moral agency.

On Kant's account of knowledge, the interplay between imagination and understanding involves the application of a concept, through determinant judgment, to the given of intuition (e.g., CPR 155 [A19/B33]). When the application is successful, our cognitive faculties are in agreement: Kant says that in this case, the 'agreement of the two powers of the mind [imagination and understanding] is lawful' (CJ 175 [5:295]). Crucially for my argument, in this case, this agreement gives rise to a feeling of pleasure: 'This determination [grasping the object in a single representation and determining the manifold in its form] is an end with regard to cognition; and in relation to this it is also always connected with satisfaction' (CJ 125-6 [5:242]). By contrast, until an intuition is successfully brought under an empirical concept, imagination and understanding are in disharmony, or at least not in harmony: they aim at the determinant application of a concept but fail to achieve it. In other words, they are not in agreement, and no pleasure arises from their interplay – in fact, it gives rise to a feeling of displeasure since its aim is not attained. As a result, successful cognition is a

[59] As Kant notes, 'we also judge enjoyment and pain by a higher satisfaction or dissatisfaction within ourselves (namely, moral): whether we ought to refuse them or give ourselves over to them' (A 340 [7:237]). Similarly, the pain we feel when the moral law strikes down self-love is a morally good pain (see CPrR 199 [5:73]). Although I cannot support this claim here, as rational agents, we have the duty to reflect on our feelings in light of our moral and epistemic standards if they are to be used as legitimate guides for the purpose of orientation.

harmonious, and thus pleasurable, case of unfree play of imagination and understanding whilst unsuccessful cognition is a disharmonious (or at least not harmonious), and thus painful, one. However, feelings of epistemic pleasure and pain are normally so inconspicuous and ubiquitous that they are barely noticeable.[60] Insofar as they are triggered by the attainment (or lack thereof) of our cognitive aims, their noticeable effects are essentially motivational (i.e., they engage our cognitive interest and thus our drive for further cognition). Nevertheless, what is crucial for my argument is that these feelings are distinctly epistemic in the sense that they are not only caused by, but also manifest the state of, our cognitive activity. This can be accounted for by the fact that they fulfill the following conditions: (1) They are effects of cognitive activity (i.e., the interaction between intuition and understanding). (2) Their intentional object is the relation between the cognitive faculties of the subject (i.e., their agreement or disagreement). (3) They appraise the subject's activity from the perspective of the interest of theoretical reason (i.e., successful or unsuccessful cognition). It is in this sense that they function as appraisals of the state of epistemic agency.

The same holds for moral agency. One way of understanding Kant's account of moral deliberation is as the attempt to harmonize our cognitive and conative faculties through the exercise of moral judgment.[61] Universalizing a maxim consists in attempting to establish an agreement between a particular (my subjective maxim) and a universal (the form of the law). When we do this successfully, our maxim is 'in agreement with this objective principle of rational beings as givers of universal law' (G 84 [4:434]). Crucially for my argument, although it is not sufficiently noted in the literature, Kant claims that when the will is determined in accordance with the moral law, this is followed by a feeling of moral satisfaction: a feeling of 'satisfaction in consciousness of one's conformity with [duty]' (CPrR 171 [5:38]).[62] This suggests that there is an intrinsic connection between dutiful willing and the feeling of moral contentment. On my account, the positive valence of this feeling stems from the fact that I have willed in agreement with the command of reason. What I have chosen to do is in agreement with what I ought to do: my faculty of desire is in agreement with my faculty of practical reason, and this agreement is manifested by a feeling of moral pleasure.[63] Conversely for shame – it is a feeling that is negatively valenced because willing contrary to duty goes against the demand of practical reason, and practical reason and the higher faculty of desire are in disagreement.[64] What makes these feelings

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[60] See CJ 74 [5:187]. For a discussion of Kant's claim that this pleasure goes unnoticed, see Merritt (2014).

[61] As Kant notes, acting from duty restores 'the union and harmony of the mental powers' (LE 142 [27:366]).

[62] As Kant notes, this feeling of pleasure can only follow from virtuous willing since it cannot exist prior to it: 'I [Kant] must assume [a person] beforehand to be righteous and obedient to the law, i.e., to be one in whom *the law precedes the pleasure*, in order for him subsequently to feel a pleasure of the soul in the consciousness of his well-conducted course of life' (Kant 2002, p. 436 [8:395], emphasis in original). See also LE 382 [27:643-44], G 54 [4:399], 106 [4:460], CPrR 171 [5:38], 234 [5:117], 235 [5:119], and MM 522 [6:391]. For recent discussions of the feeling of moral contentment, see Walschots (2017) and Elizondo (2016).

[63] Note that as the effect of willing on feeling, the feeling of moral pleasure differs from what Kant calls 'moral feelings' (*moralische Gefühl*), which are affective preconditions of dutiful willing rather than effects of it (MM 528-9 [6:399-400]).

[64] Note, however, that there can be higher and lower versions of the same type of feeling. For instance, there is a moral and a prudential feeling of shame. In its moral form, as I just showed it manifests the disagreement between practical reason and the higher faculty of desire in its moral form. In its prudential form by contrast, it is concerned with our relation to the world (e.g., whether our activity is in line with social norms, which we have a lower desire to abide by). In trivial cases, prudential shame is probably

distinctly moral is that they are not only caused by, but also manifest our moral activity. As is the case for epistemic feelings, this can be accounted for by the fact that they fulfil the following conditions: (1) They are effects of moral activity (i.e., the interaction between practical reason and the faculty of desire). (2) Their intentional object is the relation between the practical faculties of the subject (i.e., their agreement or disagreement). (3) They appraise the subject's activity from the perspective of the ends of practical reason (i.e., moral interest).[65] It is in this sense that feelings of moral pleasure and displeasure function as appraisals of the state of our moral agency.

Finally, just as epistemic feelings, moral feelings have motivational effects. Yet as is to be expected, the issue of moral motivation is a lot more complex than that of epistemic motivation, and the motivational function of feelings such as moral contentment may seem to be in tension with Kant's account of moral motivation. For as is well-known, the feeling of respect is the only moral incentive for Kant (CPrR 204 [5:79]). However crucially on my account, the feeling of moral contentment is not intended to replace respect as the moral incentive; nor does it motivate the agent to act virtuously for the sake of it since that would lead to a heteronomous form of motivation.[66] Rather, it contributes to morally good action in the future by counterbalancing the influence of sensible pleasures and thereby reducing the risk of temptation.[67] Since '[i]mpulses of nature … involve *obstacles* within the human being's mind to his fulfillment of duty and (sometimes powerful) forces opposing it' (MM 513 [6:380], emphasis in original), the stronger our moral feelings, the weaker, in relation, our sensible feelings come to be. It is thus by making us less susceptible to temptation that moral feelings such as moral contentment enhance our virtuous disposition.[68]

Of course, a lot more could also be said about the role of feelings in moral and cognitive agency. The feelings discussed in this section are only two instances of moral and epistemic feelings, and Kant's philosophy contains a wide range of emotions that play a substantial orientational role *vis-à-vis* agency – for instance, the role of moral feelings in the process of moral deliberation or the feeling of cognitive pleasure in the process of systematisation of our cognition.[69] Nevertheless, what I hope to have shown is that feelings play an essential role in the general economy of the Kantian mind.

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better called 'embarrassment' but the disagreement at play is of the same kind. Similarly in the case of pride, its moral form is the self-esteem in the dignity of our humanity and its prudential form the self-esteem in a quality or action that fulfils a lower desire (e.g., for social recognition). Kant sometimes calls moral pride 'pride proper (*animus elatus*), which is … a concern to yield nothing of one's human dignity in comparison with others' (MM 581 [6:465]). Contrast with 'the pride that usually comes over those fortunate enough to have the means for beneficence' (MM 588 [6:473]). Thus the difference between higher and lower feelings stems from the fact that the former appraise our activity from the perspective of our moral interest, while the latter do so from the perspective of our prudential interests, which involve social norms and inter-personal relationships.

[65] See CPrR 236 [5:120].

[66] In fact, Kant is well aware of this danger (2002, p. 436 [8:395]).

[67] See for instance MM 519 [6:388].

[68] It is in this sense that the practice of virtue is intrinsically connected to the agent's moral sensibility and in particular her feelings of moral pleasure and displeasure: they manifest as well as enhance her moral striving. For a useful discussion of the affective conditions of virtuous striving, see Cagle (2005) and Baxley (2010, especially p. 54). As I have argued elsewhere, part of leading a virtuous life consists in enhancing our capacity for moral life by cultivating the feelings and desires that support virtue and minimizing those that do not (Cohen 2017c).

[69] See Cohen (2017a) and (2017b) for some suggestions in this respect.

Conclusion

This paper set out to extract from Kant's writings an account of the nature of the emotions, their underlying unity, and their function. As I have argued, emotions are affective mental states that function as valenced appraisals of our relation to ourselves and the world. Although some of the interpretation put forward in this paper has been programmatic, I hope to have shown that it has the potential to provide a fruitful Kantian account of the emotions, an account that is both plausible from the perspective of Kant scholarship and capable of contributing to current debates on the subject. While the aims of this paper have been essentially interpretative, I want to conclude by highlighting some of the potential shortcomings as well as the strengths of the Kantian theory of emotions set out here.

One of the most pressing objections to my account of Kant's view is that emotions turn out not to inform us about the world.[70] This may worry Kantians and non-Kantians alike since in line with common sense, on many if not most accounts of emotion, they do.[71] The argument defended here has addressed this worry by arguing that rather than being a weakness of Kant's account, it is one of its strengths. For, by bringing to light the fact that emotions play the crucial role of enabling us to appraise our mental activity, I have shown that they are an essential part of the way we as agents orient ourselves cognitively, morally and prudentially. By doing so, I hope to have put an end to the illegitimate reign of overly cognitive interpretations of Kant and to have restored the balance between all the faculties of the mind. For on my reading, we cannot understand the full Kantian picture of mental agency without a robust account of the unique contribution of feelings to it.

A second distinctive feature of Kant's position as I interpret it is that it goes against contemporary trends that define emotions in terms of other, putatively more fundamental, mental states. By contrast with assimilative models of the emotions, I have shown that Kant puts forward a model that defines them first and foremost as feelings. Thus on the Kantian picture, while emotions may occur together with conative or cognitive states, they are neither cognitive nor conative, and taking this claim seriously points to a philosophical position that, perhaps surprisingly, is similar in important respects to contemporary 'feeling theories' of emotions.[72] For just as Kant's account, these contemporary theorists put forward an account according to which there is an irreducible affective component of the emotions, a component that has a distinctive phenomenology as well as a unique function.[73] However, what sets the

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[70] There are of course many other objections that could be raised against my account. For instance, doesn't it rule out unconscious emotions? Can all feelings be reduced to feelings of pleasure and pain? Aren't feelings simply a part of emotions? I leave them for another paper.

[71] On behalf of Kantians, Nancy Sherman notes with regret that Kant's 'claim is that feelings themselves don't tell us much of anything about the world. They tell us that we have been affected, but give us no determinate news of those things [i.e., the things that affect us] or of our own state either'. She concludes, 'An intentional or evaluative view of the emotions would better cohere with his appreciation of their epistemic function' (Sherman 1997, pp. 179-80). For a good example of the non-Kantian version of this worry, see what Daniel Whiting calls the 'objection from the object-directed emotions' (2009, p. 282).

[72] See in particular James (1884), Greenspan (1988), Damasio (1994), Goldie (2000), Goldstein (2002), Prinz (2004) and more recently Whiting (2006) and Kriegel (2014). These accounts are of course rather different, but they share the claim that feelings constitute an essential part, if not the essential part, of an emotion.

[73] In particular, what Kant's view and these 'feeling theories' have in common is that they emphasize three essential features of feelings: their function as valenced appraisal, their non-cognitivism and their intentionality. For instance, Kant's account as I have delineated it has much in common with Prinz's definition of the function of emotions as valenced appraisals (Prinz 2004, chs. 3 and 7). It also shares

proposed Kantian account apart and makes it an original addition to current debates is that it provides an alternative to Jamesian and neo-Jamesian theories, which are committed to reductionist, biological or somatic conceptions of feelings.[74] By contrast, Kant takes feelings to be mental states that are intrinsically connected to agency and its conditions: they appraise the state of our activity for the purpose of orienting it. My reading of Kant thus opens new perspectives for a feeling-based account of emotion that is grounded on the powerful tools provided by his conception of rational agency.[75]

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Goldie's view that feelings can have a form of intentionality while remaining non-cognitive – they are 'feeling towards' (Goldie 2000, p. 58).

[74] According to James (1884, pp. 201-2, 204), anything that is not primarily constituted by visceral disturbance is by definition not an emotion. For a contemporary version of this view, see Prinz's definition of emotions as 'embodied appraisals' (Prinz, 2004, especially pp. 55-60).

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